

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

25/06/20

KEY DECISION: No

Lichfield District Small Business Grant Scheme, Round 7 allocations

1. Decision:

- 1.1 That the cabinet member approves the allocation of funding for the Lichfield District Small Business Grant Scheme's seventh round to the project bids detailed in the report.

2. Statement of Reasons:

- 2.1 The Lichfield District Small Business Grant Scheme commenced on the 21st November 2018, offering grants of between £500 to £1,500 to assist local small businesses and start-ups looking to overcome financial barriers to growth.
- 2.2 The scheme is planned to operate for an initial three year programme with £20,000 being allocated per annum for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21. The annual allocation has been subdivided into quarterly bidding rounds of £5,000. Each application for funding is assessed against a scoring criteria based on meeting the aims of the scheme - to support business and employment growth and helping to deliver the priority of a vibrant and prosperous local economy.
- 2.3 To qualify for consideration under the initiative, each applicant has had to have previously attended a course of business support provided for under the GBSLEP Enterprise for Success programme.
- 2.4 The scoring criteria – detailed in **Appendix 1** – cover the following areas:
-Employment
-Growth
-Business Plan
- 2.5 Due to the current coronavirus outbreak and social distancing restrictions, businesses have adopted digital platforms to continue developing and expanding their business. We have undertaken a policy change in light of this, to re-include laptops/personal computers/mobiles/tablets. These restrictions shall remain in place whilst the easing occurs, as consumers and businesses have adapted to digital means, the re-including of IT shall support new start-ups with beginning their business journey as face-to-face communication remains to be restricted, and may continue in the future.
- 2.6 Overall five applications were submitted within this round with businesses located throughout the district applying. The types of businesses who applied ranged from a town planning and development consultancy, personal coaching, marketing, an estate agents and interior design. Each business applied for varying project costs to be supported by the grant, from marketing products such as new websites and paid for advertising, to equipment

to support business start-ups such as laptops, software and physical equipment for group training sessions.

2.7 Within round seven the amount of grant requested outweighs the amount available through the current round by £1,935.46. Unfortunately a previous rounds candidate is unable to claim his grant allocation, making £1,217.15 available. These changes have been made creating the amount of grant requested being oversubscribed by £718.31. Project items have been taken out to meet the grant allocation for the round with items withdrawn not adding as much value to progress these businesses as items which have been included for approval.

2.8 The following summary paragraphs provide information on why it is recommended that monies are allocated to the following respective bids:

Holland Lloyd

Holland Lloyd is a start-up providing town planning and development advice. The company will help developers, homeowners, small businesses, and public sector clients navigate the planning process. The owner is seeking to purchase capital equipment to help run the day-to-day activities of the business, access the RTPI business directory and specialist land software to be able to gain work whilst using site sourcing software to find and assess sites. The marketing documents will provide the company with a professional look when liaising with clients.

Butterfly Development

Butterfly Development is a personal coaching business support individuals, groups/teams, leaders, executives, business owners and organisations to develop themselves by coaching them to be successful. Through on-to-one coaching sessions and group/team coaching. The business is seeking to use the grant for a laptop, IT accessories and physical flipchart equipment to be able to perform online and physical coaching sessions. The owner currently uses an out of date laptop which isn't able to perform a lot of the activities needed to provide coaching to the different target audiences.

Golddust Direct

Golddust Direct is a start-up business looking to offer 'off the shelf' direct mail campaign solutions, providing an online selection of hardcopy posted business direct mail campaigns. They are seeking to use their grant funding to go towards website development costs. As the business is 'selling' itself as digital marketing, they need to have a credible online presence through search engine optimisation and an engaging website.

Andrew Downing-Booth Estate Agents

Andrew Downing-Booth Estate Agents are an estate agents selling residential property and offer an auction service, whilst they occupy a ground floor, retail premises in City Arcade, Lichfield City. The business currently has quite a local presence, being well known in the Lichfield area and surrounding villages but as a new business they are seeking to use the grant to undertake a marketing campaign. To use digital and physical marketing from receiving the grant to raise awareness of themselves to a wider audience, as they seek to branch out to the lettings market and more residents to use their services to put their house on the market.

Interior Choice

Interior Choice provide interior design opportunities, creating bedspreads, whilst designing and installing custom fitted window dressings and curtains for domestic and commercial premises. They have recently developed safety screens for face-to-face retail businesses, whilst the

easing of lockdown occurs. The business currently use their original, basic website as their online presence but are seeking to use the grant to develop a new website to support marketing their new product and develop new customers. The new website and web shop shall be more user friendly and help engage with potential customers to purchase the new product and create interest in their current stock.

2.9 Overall round grant request breakdown

| <u>Project costs</u> | <u>Grant requested</u> |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Holland Lloyd</i> £2,243.40 | £1,121.70 |
| <i>Butterfly Development</i> £1,599.30 | £799.65 |
| <i>Golddust Direct</i> £2,995 | £1,500 |
| <i>Andrew Downing-Booth Estate Agents</i> £3,354.36 | £1,500 |
| <i>Interior Choice</i> £3,071 | £1,500 |
| Total: £13,263.06 | £6,421.35 |

3. Any Alternative Options:

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to fund any or only some of the applications however this would not be in line with the agreed purpose of the scheme or the judgements reached having assessed the bids against the agreed criteria.

Appendix 1: Scoring criteria details

Employment

- What is the potential to growth the number of people employed by the business over the next two years?

Growth

- Does the equipment applied for support delivery of the expected outputs & outcomes?
- What is the expected increase in cash flow in the next two years?
- How do they plan to increase cash flow?
- Does the application demonstrate a real barrier to growth?

Business Plan

- How do you view the projections (cash flow) in relation to the planned growth of the business?